

Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Community Review WINTER 2006
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Message from the Director

Eric Raff, ODHH Director

Greetings and wishing you a happy and successful 2006! While we live by the calendar year, ODHH is currently halfway through Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06). We're already looking forward to FY07 opportunities and challenges! Fiscal year is a part of the fiscal/budget cycle. FY07 begins on July 1, 2006 and ends on June 30, 2007.

Lately, I've been preparing ODHH for FY07 activities: 2007-2011 ODHH Strategic Plan. The strategic plan document usually is updated every two years. It is important to me that I get your feedback to guide me in writing new goals and maintaining existing services. The 2007-2011 draft version will be available for public comments this spring before it is finalized this summer. You can attend town hall forums open to the public to be held in Spokane and Tacoma. Another town hall forum will be held exclusively for the deafblind in Seattle. Dates and locations are listed in this newsletter edition.

FY07 Budget I began drafting a budget last November and will finalize it by end of January. The budget is about funding programs and goals identified in the current strategic plan and will be effective on July 1st. It is during this process, ODHH recommends increases or decreases on the monthly surcharge rate found in telephone bills to cover the cost to provide telephone relay services & reasonable accommodations and to distribute telecommunication equipment.

Government Management Accountability and Performance known as "GMAP", this is a statewide process where ODHH will explain to the public and state government officials how we are being accountable: Are we providing services in accordance to the strategic plan and budget? Currently, GMAP implementation is underway with the goal of becoming more visible in FY07. I've been working with the staff to be prepared to report performance measures with facts and data.

During 2006 we will continue to work on current goals and activities, address emerging challenges. At the same time, ODHH already has to think and plan for the future, 2007 and beyond!

Google Celebrates Louis Braille's 197th Birthday

Submitted by Colleen Rozmaryn

Did you sign on to the Google website on Wednesday, January 4, 2006?

Did you know that the word "Google" was spelled out in Braille "dots"?

That was done to honor the date as the 197th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille communication system for the Blind. Thanks, Google! for honoring communication in this way, you have shown your appreciation for the disabled community!

Is DVR Right For You?

Submitted by Terry Redmon, DVR Chief of Special Programs

Do you want to work?

If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to get or keep a job, and you want to work, the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) can help.

What is DVR?

DVR is a statewide resource for people with disabilities. We assist individuals with disabilities in getting and keeping a job. DVR is a state and federally-sponsored program. DVR works in partnership with the community and businesses to develop employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Who does DVR serve?

DVR may serve you if you:

1. Have a physical or mental disability that makes it difficult to get a job or keep a job that matches your skills, potential, and interest.
2. Need services and support, such as counseling, training, or assistance with a job search, in order to get or keep a job.

How can DVR help me go to work?

DVR staff will help you get the information you need to make a good decision about:

- What type of job you want
- Steps needed to reach your goal of going to work

With support from DVR, you will:

- Design and carry out a step-by-step plan to reach your employment goals.

What types of services does DVR offer?

DVR offers a variety of services to assist people with disabilities to prepare for, get, and keep jobs. The services you use depend on your individual needs and circumstances.

DVR can provide you with the information necessary to assist you in deciding which services you need to reach your job goal. Examples of services include:

Assessment services to measure your strengths, capabilities, work skills and interests. These services assist you in selecting a job goal and the DVR services you need to reach that goal.

Counseling and guidance services provided throughout the rehabilitation process to help you make good decisions about how to reach your goals.

Independent living services help you understand and deal with disability issues that prevent you from working; these include, but are not limited to:

- Training in self-care
- Money management
- Using community transportation

Assistive technology services assist you with communication or doing tasks by using devices such as, hearing aids, visual aids, special computer software, etc. You can explore with your counselor how technology might help you reach your employment potential or get a device you need to go to work.

Training services provide you with work skills needed to achieve your employment goal.

Job placement helps you carry out your job search, including:

- Assistance completing application forms
- Developing a resume
- Practicing interview skills, and identifying job leads

New Sign Language Interpreter Management (SLIM) Program Manager

Happy New Year! This is Emily Hill – you may remember me as the Program Support to several Program Managers in ODHH. In October, I was promoted to one of our newest Program Manager positions, Sign Language Interpreter Management, (SLIM).

On July 1, 2005, ODHH took over management of the Sign Language Interpreter Services contract and began the SLIM program. The contract was rewritten, and we changed some providers. Now we contract with several referral agencies and several freelance interpreters in the area. Right now, we are working on accepting new bids for this contract so that we can have more interpreter referral agencies and freelance interpreters available!

Your question, I'm sure, is, "How does this benefit me?" This contract benefits you in several ways! For example, if you need to visit a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor to get help in finding a job, DVR will use this contract to find an interpreter for that appointment. What happens if you are a Medicaid client who uses sign language and need to go see your doctor? Your doctor will use our contract to get an interpreter for your appointment. All of DSHS (and some other state agencies) are able to get sign language interpreters to meet your needs through this contract.

If you are a sign language interpreter, the benefit to you is that DSHS provides you with jobs! If you haven't already, you can sub-contract through any of our contracted referral agencies. You can contact them to request an Interpreter

Registration form, or download one from our website (<http://odhh.dshs.wa.gov>), or contact me (hillemary@odhh.dshs.wa.gov) to receive one by mail or email. You also may be able to contract directly with DSHS, without going through an agency. You can contact me to get more information.

That's all for now. Next time I'll let you know about more specific things related to the SLIM program. Have a great new year!

New Staff Introduction

My name is Jenifer T. Baker. I am the new program support. I just joined ODHH in December 2005. I am hard of hearing when I have my one hearing aid on and good with one to one communication. I am totally DEAF without hearing aids in both ears and depend heavily on ASL. I went to NTID for one year then cross registered to RIT School of Photography and graduated with a BFA (Bachelors in Fine Arts) in Photojournalism in 1983. I was a former photographer for Deaf Life Magazine, and some of my work was published in the early years. I am continuing to do freelance work on documentary photography. I worked for the federal government in D.C. and N.J for 5 years. I have worked for the State of Washington since 1990. I am still new to this job. But basically my job is to be a support to 3 program managers, Kelly Robison –TED program, Colleen Rozmaryn –ACT program and Steve Peck – SHS program. I enjoy traveling – exploring new places, photography, reading, being with my good friends and my 5 cats.

Ears, Hearing, and Beyond

April 1, 2006 • 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall at Benaroyal Hall

This conference is open to the public and is free for everyone interested in learning more about the ear, how to prevent hearing loss, coping strategies for hearing loss, and what's new in current research.

Phone: (206) 616-2962

Website: <http://depts.washington.edu/hearing/>

Virginia Merrill Bloedel
Hearing Research Center
UW Medicine

What can you do for your community?

THE DSHS/ODHH ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS SOME VACANCIES!

The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is currently recruiting new members for its' advisory committee to fill some vacancies. ODHH would like to receive applications from deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled citizens who would represent their communities. DSHS is looking to appoint five qualified individuals.

For two of five vacancies, we must have:

- one person with a speech disability
- one person from an ethnic background

This advisory committee is an important way to share comments, make suggestions, provide feedback to ODHH about its' programs and services. The advisory committee has an opportunity to participate in discussions about ODHH updates, strategic plan, annual budget, and sometimes guest speakers. Your willingness and time to assist ODHH to improve the effectiveness of the services provided would be very much appreciated.

Members are requested to share any information from advisory committee meetings with their community members. Then the members return to the next meeting to share any information from the communities.

The advisory committee usually meets 4 times per year in Sea-Tac but may require travel to other regions of Washington State. ODHH makes all travel arrangements and provide travel/per diem reimbursement to members for attending the meetings.

To request an application, please contact:

Rena Patch

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

PO Box 45300

Olympia, WA 98504-5300

patchrr@dshs.wa.gov

Toll free number: 1-(800) 422-7930 V/TTY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

You are invited to attend and watch the Advisory Committee meetings.

WHEN: Saturday, March 4th and Saturday, May 6th

TIME: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

WHERE: Red Lion Hotel at Sea-Tac
18220 International Blvd.
Seattle, WA 98188

ACCOMMODATIONS:

- Meeting location is accessible
- Sign Language services are provided
- Assistive Listening Devices and Computer Assisted Real Time Captioning are provided
- Deaf-Blind Interpreters and materials in alternative materials are available upon 3 weeks advance before the meeting dates. Please make a request to Rena Patch at patchrr@dshs.wa.gov or call her at 1-(800) 422-7930 (Voice/TTY) or email her at atpatchrr@dshs.wa.gov.

Parking is free!

An important note: Please limit your use of fragrance as an accommodation.

Farewell and Good Luck to Lindsey Trimbel

Submitted by Lucas Doelman

Lindsey Trimble joined ODHH just over one year ago and now we say goodbye as she moves on to a position of greater challenges and opportunities. Lindsey is a person with a lot of humor. In my 4 years now as the Office Assistant for ODHH, I have seen many changes, often involving the receptionist position. When Lindsey came on board, her professionalism and skills were very apparent. When she had to deal with difficult situations, she was always polite and willing to do her best to meet the clients' needs. Since being here I learned the value of a work "family" and Lindsey was definitely part of that family. When people were down, she found ways to cheer them up. She was a person with a lot of spirit and a lot of energy. I personally will miss her as all my other ODHH family members. Eric Raff, Director of ODHH continues to embrace the motto of "Family" that was initially established by the former Director, Mr. Leon Curtis. Lindsey was very much a family member; kind hearted, and an amazing employee. I wish her well at her new job.

Milestones *for ODDH in FY2005*

7/1/04	ODDH Director appointed to HB 2765 Advisory Committee on Early Intervention and Infants & Toddlers who are Deaf
7/1/04	Hearing Speech and Deafness Center becomes new Regional Service Center for Bellingham region
7/21-23/04	ODDH sponsors Intertribal Deaf Council conference
8/13/04	Office of Secretary establishes DSHS Committee on Accessibility for Hard of Hearing
8/31/04	Michelle Reed resigns after 14 yrs - becomes freelance interpreter
10/1/04	Emily Hill promoted from Customer Relations to Program Support
10/1/04	Rena Patch hired as Executive Assistant
10/8/04	Lilly Hernadez – temporary Executive Assistant – officially retires
10/25-27/04	ODDH Director visits SEWSCDHH – Pasco & Yakima
11/8-10/04	ODDH Director visits SWCDHH - Vancouver
11/10/04	WSDBC recognized as ex-officio member-ODDH Advisory Committee
11/16/04	Lindsey Trimble hired as Customer Relations
12/14/04	Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) Request For Qualification & Quotation (RFQQ) released

1/25/05	DSHS Cabinet approves transfer of ASL contract from GA to ODHH
1/26/05	DB Communication Device Request For Proposal released
2/9-10/05	ODHH Director visits TACID - Tacoma
3/05	ODHH releases new ODHH agency brochures
3/23-25/05	ODHH Director visits EWCDHH - Spokane
4/1/05	Sign Language Interpreter Services RFQQ released
4/1/05	Ryan Bondroff hired as Information, Referral and Advocacy manager
5/6/05	ODHH host Town Hall Meeting on SEWSCDHH @ Yakima
5/12/05	ODHH Director visits HSDC - Bellingham
6/10-12/05	ODHH sponsors WA State Association of the Deaf conference
6/18/05	ODHH sponsors Seattle Community Picnic
6/30/05	DSHS Organization Restructure Aligns ODHH under Deputy Secretary

Throughout Fiscal Year 05

DSHS Committee on Accessibility for Hard of Hearing
 ODHH/DSHS Advisory Committee on Deafness
 ODHH-Regional Service Centers Quarterly Meetings
 DSHS HB2765 Advisory Council

Video Communication for Deaf-Blind Individuals

Submitted by Liz Halperin

We have a success story to share about video access for Deaf-Blind (DB) people at Seattle's Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC).

This is the story of JoEllen Fischer. JoEllen is Deaf and low vision. She had been told that she would not find the Video Relay Service (VRS) useful. JoEllen still wanted to try to learn VRS. (A Deaf person who uses American Sign Language (ASL) calls a video relay interpreter who interprets into spoken English.)

Liz Halperin, the instructor for the Deaf-Blind Video Access Program, learned of a new lens for that available for DB people. The lens is a short-focus, wide angle lens so that a low vision DB person can sit close to the TV to see more clearly, and still be seen by the camera. Liz immediately ordered the lens for DBSC and JoEllen was one of the participants who tried it.

During training JoEllen made a VRS call to a family member who does not know ASL. The family member was surprised and said that he did not know JoEllen could call and hold a regular conversation like that! Currently Liz is helping JoEllen fill out the application form to get a Video Phone installed in her home.

JoEllen is very proud of herself, and she **SHOULD** be. She is not only doing her VRS calling independently, she is interpreting for another person who is fully blind. Not bad for someone who was not expected to get any benefit from video communication! How is that for success!?

ODHH Town Hall Make a Difference!

Identify our community needs/goals for the 5 year plan

ODHH will be hosting 2 town hall meetings to get your feedback on the ODHH 2007-2011 Strategic Plan. After an introduction, you will be invited to attend a focus group discussion on a topic important to you.

Focus Group Topics:

- Telecommunication
- Interpreting
- Social and Human Services
- Hard of Hearing or Deaf Blind Issues

Day	Date	Time	Location
Fri.	3/17/06	6:30-9:30 pm	Tacoma Tacoma Community College (Bldg. 17) 6501 S. 19th Street Tacoma, WA 98409
Sat.	4/1/06	11:30-12:30 pm 12:30-3:30 pm	Spokane Eastern Washington Center for the Deaf - Hard of Hearing N. 1206 Howard Street Spokane, WA 99201

Please check either <http://www.1.dshs.wa.gov/hrsa/odhh/> or www.mapquest.com for maps or directions.

Sign language Interpreter and Assistive Listening System will be provided. The meeting location is accessible.

Request for Oral or Tactile Interpreting or CART must be submitted to Jenifer T. Baker, by email (bakerjt@dshs.wa.gov), or 1-800-422-7930 TTY/Voice, *at least 3 weeks before the date of the town hall meeting.*

ODHH Selects Washington Relay Provider

In December 2004, ODHH released a Request for Qualifications and Quotations (RFQQ) in order to follow federal laws requiring that telecommunications relay services be provided. The state contract with Sprint Relay, which has provided Washington Relay since 1998, was due to end on June 28, 2005. Bids were received from several major relay services providers. A team of people knowledgeable in the area of telecommunications technology and the needs of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing relay users reviewed and scored the proposals. Sprint Relay provided a price and services proposal that would best benefit Washington residents and was selected as the winning bidder.

After several months of negotiations between Sprint Relay representatives and ODHH's team, a three-year contract was signed by all parties and became effective August 28, 2005. Washington Relay provides federally-required relay services features. Sprint and ODHH agreed to a unique partnership that will allow ODHH to participate in the testing of new relay services and features developed by Sprint before they are made available to all relay users. The relay users could provide feedback to Sprint Relay for improvements. This will allow Washington Relay to bring "cutting-edge" relay services to Washington residents when they become available.

In addition to the testing and feedback partnership, Sprint Relay will continue to expand on its Outreach Plan that will increase awareness to hearing users and businesses about relay services. Many businesses and people think that a relay call is a type of telephone marketing service and often hang up on relay callers. One of the key awareness activities is called "Do Not Hang Up." The awareness activity involves sending informational postcards and other materials to

key businesses such as banks, hospitals, medical clinics, and services industries. Sprint Relay also will release TV “info-mercials” about Washington Relay for the Eastern Washington area within the next several months using the “Do Not Hang Up” message.

In addition, Sprint has agreed to contract with several non-profit organizations to provide awareness to Washington residents about new telecommunications relay features, such as wireless Internet relay, video relay call-back messages, and other new technologies under development.

Sprint Relay is now hosting a statewide Washington Relay logo design contest that has a \$1,000 first prize. The winning design will become the new Washington Relay logo, replacing the current logo. Please read the Sprint logo contest flyer below.

Washington Relay LOGO Contest

Grand Prize: \$1,000

We need people like YOU – creative and artistic – to design a brand new logo for Washington Relay (www.washingtonrelay.com), a joint service provided by DSHS/ODHH and Sprint.

Logo entries are due before April 15, 2006

For LOGO Contest Information and Rules – please

- go to <http://www.washingtonrelay.com/LogoContest.pdf>
- send an e-mail to dan.brubaker@sprint.com
- call 888-655-3514 TTY or 866-410-5787 ext. 89962 Voice
- send a FAX to 913-523-0956

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1 (800) 422-7930 V/TTY
(360) 902-8000 Direct**

Web site: <http://odhh.dshs.wa.gov>

**Contact ODHH by Video at:
D-Link Video IP Address: 209.181.93.249
D-Link Video: (360) 902-8000**

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Free Matter
for the Blind
and Physically
Handicapped